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DEPT PASS: See list of posts on page five

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DATE: February 25, 1964

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Drafted by:

RW Murphy/M Draper/LKSabbagh:lf 2-24-64 NGThacher, Counselor of Embassy

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POLITICAL/ECONOMIC

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1. Spinelli's Views on Yemen Developments. UNCTAD's Special Representative in charge of UNYOM, Ambassador Pier SPINELLI, paid a brief visit to Jidda enroute Geneva during the past week and reviewed with Ambassador Hart developments affecting solution of the Yemen conflict.

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Ambassador Hart pointed out that restoration of SAG-GUAR diplomatic relations need not necessarily be tied to a solution satisfactory to both sides over the Yemen.

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3. Promising Oil Structure Encountered in Preferential Area. Petroleum Minister Ahmad Zakī JAMJUM has announced that the initial results of the seismic survey work being undertaken by the Robert Ray Group in an area of Central Najd, formerly known as the Preferential Zone (and relinquished recently by Aramco), have indicated the existence of a 20-kilometer-long structure favorable to the occurrence of oil. This structure is located at Bir Umm al-Jamajim near Wadi al-'Aqq to the north of Riyadh. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The series of public announcements made by the Petroleum Minister, referring to the likelihood of oil deposits in the offshore area of the Red Sea, as well as in the Central Najd, appears designed to encourage bidding by petroleum companies on new concessions. The Petroleum Minister reportedly is considering selling the seismic data to interested companies at the end of next summer, when the Robert Ray group expects to complete its tabulations on the offshore areas. Data on the Central Najd, however, will take considerably more time to prepare. Geologists familiar with the Preferential zone, including some Aramco employees, consider the presence of oil a near certainty; whether it is commercially worthwhile would be another question. "Domes" and other favorable geological evidence can be seen easily in the area. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. Progress on Steel Rolling Mill. IPEC, the British engineering group employed by PETROMIN as an industrial consultant, has been reviewing equipment bids submitted by various equipment manufacturers in Europe and the United States for installation in the contemplated rolling mill in Jidda, for which the Saudi Government recently appropriated SR 30,800,000 (\$6.8 million). IPEC, or a similar engineering group, will design the new plant and supervise its construction and initial operation. Representatives of Sir Alexander Gibbs, the British firm which with others holds IPEC as a "captive" consulting organization, are now in Jidda for site and feasibility surveys of the new plant. (UNCLASSIFIED)

5. Visit of Douglas DC-9 Team. A five-man Douglas Aircraft Corporation team arrived in Jidda February 19 for a sales presentation of the DC-9. Ahmad JAMJUM, Chairman of Saudi Airlines Board of Directors, and other airline officials reportedly were favorably impressed, particularly with the Douglas prediction that deliveries could be made in early 1966, only a few months later than its closest competitor, the BAC-111. (UNCLASSIFIED)

The arrival of the DC-9 team occurred at a particularly favorable moment, because Saudi Airlines has been deliberating over the purchase of short-range aircraft to supplement and eventually replace its fleet of ten DC-3s and 10 Convairs now employed on internal and certain regional routes. Moreover, improvement and expansion of the civil aviation infrastructure is now going ahead at an ever accelerated rate, with the construction of new airfields and installation of improved communications services, thus insuring that such advanced aircraft will be utilized effectively in about two years. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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PSYCHOLOGICAL

2. Assassination Plots Against Johnson and Inonu. Al-Nadwa of February 22 came out with a banner headline saying "Failure of Two Plots to Assassinate Johnson and Inonu." Considerable details were given to the alleged plot to assassinate President Johnson while he was in Los Angeles, mentioning that Hitler's picture, Nazi emblems and leaflets were found in the motor car of the plotters. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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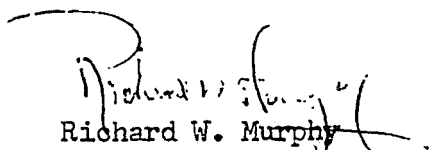
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5. ~~Belgian Press Delegation. More to Come.~~ Commenting to the Ambassador and the PAO on his pleasure with the current visit of a Belgian press delegation, Minister of Information Jamil Hujaylan stated that he was planning to issue invitations to similar delegations from Spain, Morocco, Lebanon and the Sudan. The Minister said he was hopeful U.S. authorities would assist in selecting an American press delegation. (UNCLASSIFIED)

For the Ambassador:


Richard W. Murphy
Second Secretary of Embassy

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